



Sonoma County Special Districts Association

Membership Meeting Minutes Thursday, September 22, 2022 2:00 – 3:30 p.m.

MEETING HELD VIRTUALLY THROUGH GO TO MEETING

I. Call to Order/Roll Call

President, Ramona Faith, called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

Members Present: Anneke Turbeville, Colleen Haley, Jennifer Crayne, Tamara Davis, Jennifer Bechtold, Ramona Faith, Cheryl Doran-Girard, Phil Smith, Valerie Quinto, Matt McDermott

Minutes conducted by: Jennifer Bechtold

II. Open Forum/Public Comment – Ramona Faith, President

Ramona asked if there was any comments from the group and there were none. She asked Colleen if there is a list of special districts who are not part of CSDA, that we can reach out to and encourage people to join our Chapter. Colleen will send us this list, though it may not be current.

Valerie mentioned that LAFCO has an opening for a special district and our Chapter may be a way to help them fill that seat. Ramona mentioned this opening to her Board last night. Tamara commented she is putting her name in for this position.

III. Approval of Minutes

A. Regular Meeting of June 23, 2022

Motion moved by Jennifer Crayne and seconded by Cheryl Doran-Girard

Motion Carried: Aye 9 No 0 Abstain 0

IV. Introduction of Guest Speaker, Sean Hamlin, Third District Director, Office of Chris Coursey, Sonoma County Board of Supervisors – Jennifer Bechtold, Secretary

Jennifer Bechtold introduced Sean Hamlin.

Sean said the Supervisors don't have a lot of interaction with special districts but hear a lot about them. His wife is a public law attorney and she is the special district go to at the firm, so he hears a lot about the struggles of special districts.

Sean asked for input on challenges the special districts face. Ramona said the Petaluma Health Care District receives no tax dollars unlike most special districts. They are focused on health and while COVID is settling down, we'll always have this around and feel the impact for years to come. She said the impact to our seniors and youth is extremely troubling. In the past 12 months, 18% of south county youth has contemplated suicide. Substance and alcohol abuse is up 174% and 30% of students in Sonoma County are not up to date with immunizations. Ramona commented if we don't take care of this now, there will be more emergencies. Another struggle is mental health issues. We have crisis response team (SAFE), in Petaluma, Cotati, and Rohnert Park. Currently, Marriage and Family Therapists are only dealing with health crisis at this time. They are not dealing with stuff before crisis hits which means there will be more crisis in the near future.

Sean mentioned they are always busy at the County level. The Supervisors are so busy and not always available as much as the District Directors are. He suggests meeting and engaging with our Supervisors when possible, or least annually. He also feels it could be valuable to meet with Supervisors as a group when we have a common issue. There is power in numbers. All supervisors are willing to meet and it may be easy to go through the staffers as they are the gatekeepers. Sean will send us the name and email for the supervisors and their executive assistants.

Sean asked what the County or Supervisors could do better. Valerie asked that the County not duplicate or recreate the wheel on programs other entities are already doing. Jennifer Bechtold shared that there is a lack of communication in general, which can be frustrating. For instance, when the County received 96 million in COVID funds, no communications went out to special districts they could be eligible for these funds. When she reached out to the County about requesting a portion of those fund, the answer was just no, that we did not qualify. Yet all County employees received essential employee payouts. She felt the first responders and health care workers should have been eligible to also receive these funds as they have been on the front lines of COVID.

Cheryl said it's not just the funding issues but it can be the conduit for communication. It would be helpful to know when large things are impacting

Guest Speaker, Sean Hamlin, Continued:

communities, whether there is a town government or not. For instance the consolidation of volunteer fire districts and the little that has been communicated to those communities being affected.

V. Special District Spotlight – Featuring Marin/Sonoma Mosquito Vector Control District and the Rancho Adobe Fire Protection District

Jennifer Bechtold provided an overview of the Rancho Adobe Fire Protection District and shared their biggest struggles have been with finding new streams of revenue, keeping up with pay parity of neighboring districts and retention of employees. A recent push to consolidate with the Sonoma County Fire District failed because the County was unable to fund the \$2 million deficit created by the consolidation. This would have brought the districts together to share administrative and other services and help expedite the process of providing ALS paramedic to the Rancho Adobe citizens. The goal is to now hire a full-time Fire Chief and continue working towards consolidation in the future.

Phil Smith shared a video presentation and PowerPoint Presentation about the Marin/Sonoma Mosquito Vector Control District. They serve about 764,000 residents in Marin and Sonoma County and well over a million visitors. Primary prevention approach is education and outreach. MSMVCD can help businesses and citizens with mosquitos, yellow jackets and rodents/rats. Phil shared the greatest danger for our community is the West Nile virus. The District also tests ticks for Lyme disease.

VI. CSDA Update: CSDA Senior Public Affairs Field Coordinator, Colleen Haley

Colleen mentioned that the Chapter is doing great so far. Legislation this year is a state-wide initiative, the California Protection and Government Accountability Act. This limits the ability of voters and state and local governments to raise revenues for government services. This will affect small districts. This bill will be on the 2024 ballot. The CSDA is asking for districts to pass resolutions opposing this bill and make them public. Colleen will share the website where information is being circulated about this bill. There is a sample press release and sample resolution on the CSDA website.

Colleen also noted there will be a large legislative update at the end of the year.

VII. Overview and Update on Membership Process - Jennifer Crayne, Treasurer

Jennifer noted that we want to grow our voting membership and to do so, there is an application and then a board resolution to adopt. Once those are completed you need to send those documents along with a certificate of liability to the Executive Committee. Once approved, your district will be a regular voting member. The application and board resolution sample are available on our Chapter website. We are not collecting dues at this time, but as the Chapter grows, this may become an option.

Jennifer will send out a separate email to CSDA members with this information.

VIII. Good of the Order

- Ramona and Cheryl will be the next two districts in the spotlight for December.
- Jennifer C. congratulated Tamara for throwing her hat in the ring for LAFCO. She also congratulated Colleen on the birth of her daughter and welcomed her back.
- Next meeting date: January 26 from 2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

IX. Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, President Ramona Faith adjourned meeting at 3:33 p.m.

Next meeting: Commit to invite another special district to attend who are not already members.

Respectfully submitted,



Jennifer Bechtold, Secretary